



**United States Army Corps of Engineers  
Wilmington District  
P.O. Box 1890  
Wilmington, North Carolina 28402-1890**

# **News Release**

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**MEDIA ADVISORY**

## **Wilmington Harbor Project gets under way, Governor to deliver keynote speech at groundbreaking**

**WILMINGTON, North Carolina** – Governor James B. Hunt will initiate the Wilmington Harbor Project here on Friday, March 17. The nearly \$370 million project is a joint federal and state endeavor being built by the US Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District. The Corps will deepen the 38-foot deep ship channel to 42 feet from the mouth of the Cape Fear River to the State Port at Wilmington by 2003, with total project completion scheduled March 2005. Other project features include a 32-acre primary nursery area for fish, and placement of six million cubic yards of sand on area beaches.

“The 42-foot channel will allow a 900-foot container ship to realize up to \$12 million in added cargo per port call, allowing North Carolina’s businesses and industries to expand exports and create jobs,” said Erik Stromberg, Executive Director of the State Ports Authority. “Our Ports provide gateways to the global marketplace for our state – over more than 80,000 jobs and \$300 million in tax revenues are attributable to the Ports of Wilmington and Morehead City.”

The Governor, Congressman Mike McIntyre, and officials from the State Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the State Ports Authority, and the US Army Corps of Engineers, will travel to Island 13 by boat, where Governor Hunt will signal crews on the island to initiate construction. Governor Hunt and Congressman McIntyre will speak, and US Army Corps of Engineers Harbor Project Manager Wayne Bissette will explain the project en route.

**Media are invited to attend and cover the groundbreaking ceremony. Boarding will begin at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, 17 March. Return to port is approximately 1:00 p.m. Luncheon will be served aboard. Media wishing to join the harbor tour/ceremony must reserve a place on the boat by**

close of business on Tuesday 14 March. For directions and reservations, please call (910) 251-4626 and speak with Penny Schmitt.